

for a political party to come into existence, the party must have an initial conference of 1,000 persons representing two-thirds of the regions of Kazakhstan and a membership of 50,000. The OSCE, the same organization that Kazakhstan will head in the near future, denounced the restrictiveness of this law and predicted that it would have "a chilling effect on the development of political pluralism in Kazakhstan."

The media, a tool of the utmost importance in any democracy, has been dominated in Kazakhstan by government loyalists, while independent journalists are threatened and harassed for criticizing the president for government policies and practices. This, no doubt, has enhanced Nazarbayev's hold on power.

As for corruption, Kazakhstan regularly ranks close to the bottom internationally. In 2007, Kazakhstan was ranked 150 out of 179 countries by "Transparency International" league table. As a United Nations report on Kazakhstan's corruption so eloquently put it: "Corruption undermines the democratic development, performance of State institutions, and efficient use of resources. Eventually, it undermines development of society, especially of its most vulnerable groups."

So why should we care? Is it because Kazakhstan is an oil-rich country? Is it because of its proximity to Russia? Perhaps. We often seem to care more about the fate of any oil-rich country, or any country that delivers oil than countries in a similar plight that do not have oil. But we should also care because we claim to be a country that promotes democracy and human rights, a country that values the individual freedoms of humans, no matter where they live, no matter what natural resources they possess, and no matter what relations they have with the US. How can we lecture the world about abiding to human rights laws, anti-corruption laws, and judicial reform, when we cannot look straight at our friend's face and say: "For the sake of your own people, for the sake of your region, you need to do better." And now, more than ever, before it takes the Chairmanship position of the OSCE, it must reform.

HONORING CAMERON CROOKS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Cameron Crooks of Kansas City, Missouri. Cameron is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1374, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Cameron has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Cameron has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Cameron Crooks for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO CRAIG RHODES

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the retirement of Craig Rhodes, park officer and maintenance supervisor for the Marshall County Conservation Board, and to express my appreciation for his 37 years of public service to his community.

Craig began as a seasonal employee in the summers of 1969 and 1970 with the Marshall County Conservation Board. In 1971, he applied for a maintenance position that opened up and was offered the position. Craig kept the area parks, wildlife areas, prairies, river access sites and trails maintained for the public use. During his years at the Conservation Board, Craig's hard work has earned him respect and appreciation from citizens and visitors around the region.

I commend Craig Rhodes for his many years of loyalty and service to his fellow Iowans. It is an honor to represent Craig in the United States Congress, and I know my colleagues join me in wishing him a happy and healthy retirement.

HONORING TIM MOREHOUSE

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, Tim Morehouse combines the discipline of an Olympic medalist with the generosity of spirit that makes him a teacher in one of our poorer neighborhoods.

As a member of the United States sabre team, Tim won a Silver Medal at the Beijing Olympics.

He began fencing in seventh grade at Riverdale Country Day School, and switched to the sabre from the foil in the eighth grade. His skill got him recruited by Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. There he became one of the top college fencers in the country, qualifying for the NCAA championships three times.

At Brandeis, Tim was a history major and served as a resident adviser for 2 years. After graduating, he became a part of Teach for America, an education consortium that aims to bridge the achievement gap between different socio-economic groups. Morehouse went to Intermediate School 90 in Washington Heights as a 7th-grade English and social studies teacher.

As a former teacher I am proud of Tim Morehouse for his abilities as an Olympian, but even more so for his dedication to helping others. He is an example of the scholar-athlete who, having achieved his goals, then helps others to achieve theirs.

We are proud of Tim Morehouse. To be an Olympian takes dedication and training, and a lot of both. It takes a different kind of dedication to devote your life to helping others. I congratulate Tim for being superb on both counts.

CONGRATULATING HURST MAIN POST OFFICE AS A VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAM STAR SITE

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Hurst Main Post Office for being certified as a Star site in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA, Voluntary Protection Program, VPP. The Hurst Main Post Office is one of three postal VPP sites in the Fort Worth area.

The Voluntary Protection Program promotes success through effective worksite safety and health. Approval into the Voluntary Protection Program is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's way of officially recognizing the outstanding efforts of employers and employees who uphold exemplary occupational safety practices.

The distinction as a "Star" site displays Hurst Main Post Office's sustained excellence in all areas of safety and health management systems. This excellence stems from strong leadership, participation, and commitment to quality.

I commend the Hurst Main Post Office upon their receipt of this distinction for their commitment to exercising safe and healthful working conditions. Their efforts serve as an example to all, and I am proud to be their representative in the 26th District of Texas.

HONORING MAXWELL BOWERS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Maxwell Bowers of Kearney, Missouri. Maxwell is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1397, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Maxwell has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Maxwell has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Maxwell Bowers for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO NAVY COMMANDER DAVID ASJES

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Navy Commander David Asjes of Ames, Iowa as a recipient of a Bronze Star